

12-8-2017

Senior Recital: Joshua Tucker, guitar, banjo, vocals

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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Department of Music, University of Richmond, "Senior Recital: Joshua Tucker, guitar, banjo, vocals" (2017). *Music Department Concert Programs*. 516.

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**JOSHUA TUCKER
SENIOR RECITAL**

**FROM THE STUDIO OF
MIKE DAVISON**

**PERKINSON RECITAL HALL
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2017 • 7:30 PM**

Department of Music



RICHMOND
School of Arts & Sciences™

PROGRAM

Grand Exposition

Rose in the Alley

Deus Ex Machina

Eris

Ferdus

Lily

All compositions written and arranged by Joshua Tucker

Performers

Josh Tucker	guitar, banjo, vocals
Eve Gilles	flute
Dr. Mike Davison	trumpet, flugel horn
Michael Wyatt	soprano and alto saxophone
Dennon Hoernig	tenor saxophone
Valerie Galati	baritone saxophone
Reuben Davis	piano
Colby Heald	bass
Chris Cassella	drums

*Out of respect for the performers and those audience members around you,
please turn off all electronic devices before the recital begins. Thank you.*

Grand Exposition

The best storytellers are subtle with exposition. They can introduce characters and narrative elements in a manner that entices you into the story, without being obvious that they are giving you information. Of course, writing a piece and calling it "Grand Exposition" is not a subtle method. But music is only a story in the way that a painting is a thesis. No creator or author creates art or stories to simply tell a narrative; they are presenting a translation of a language dealing in emotionality.

This piece uses a complex meter, regularly switching from 6/8 to 5/8 for the majority of the melody. In a manner, this complexity is unassimilable, as it is not an obvious meter. But complex meters work when they are unnoticed. In this way, that is the exposition. I've called the collection "GenreQueer," which has two meanings for me: first, the music aims to be uncategorizable by a single genre, which is the obvious meaning; the second is that being queer means having a non-normative identity, and as a queer musician, the art that I make comes from that in part. Therefore, I want the music to be non-normative and have strange elements, but be beautiful in its own right.

Rose in the Alley

For this song, I wanted to write a jazz standard in the tradition of Gershwin, Ellington, and Cole Porter. Although most of my time in college has been focused explicitly on playing jazz music, the longest love in my life has been musical theatre. The cross sections of jazz and Broadway are very interesting, and some great examples are the many show tunes and ballads that have become standards in the jazz vernacular. As such, when I try to write "jazz," it comes out very Broadway. The horn arrangements are very much in the big band sound, and the lyrics tell a story of love growing in unlikely places, apart from where love and desire are considered normative.

Continued...

Deus Ex Machina

The phrase “deus ex machina,” meaning “god from the machine,” is used to describe a plot device that comes unexpectedly in the narrative to provide a solution or disrupt the plot. In subjective reality, disruption can be seen as harmful or helpful depending on views of society. The current political conversation casts a very dark shadow on our hopes for the future, and many minority-identified and oppressed people and classes cannot see an out. The music in this piece represents the desire to scream out against the rulers and upper classes, and effect a change. I believe that such a change would need to be a deus ex machina, something unexpected and unlike anything that we know in our world, which has inherited a history of oppression and subjugation. In the arrangement, there are patterns that are continuous, and patterns that are broken, representing the desire to overcome destructive constant force. The ending represents a dream of celebration.

Eris

A spiritual prequel to “Lily,” this tune represents the *Iliad* to Lily’s *Odyssey*, but borrowing much more explicitly from Greek mythology. I write many of my songs by messing with different tunings or capo configurations on the acoustic guitar, specifically because my favorite way to use the guitar comes by exploring the potential ranges and arrangements that it can make. The lyrics are inspired by Bob Dylan’s storytelling devices on my favorite album of his, *Blood on the Tracks*, specifically focussing on non-linear, confessional narratives. It is comprised of a number of vignettes about war, linking them to humanity’s struggle for survival, while also exploring how one’s own identity is important to oneself, and to society as a whole.

Ferdus

This piece has undergone the most changes from when I started writing it about a year and a half ago to its current version. When I originally wrote the melody, I had it set to a baroque-inspired chordal arrangement. However, I think that it fits better as a lounge-like chamber jazz waltz. The rhythm is firmly based on hemiola, or three beats against two, which is a strong element in Afro-Cuban music. Hemiola, to me, invokes a strong sense of movement, as the polyrhythms can imply multiple meters giving the music contrasting tempos. The middle section is based on a

Cuban rhythm called “bembe” which utilizes hemiola very well. I was very inspired by the music of Matt Ulery, a composer who visited and performed with University of Richmond musicians in 2016, and his ability to invoke jazz and classical chamber sounds in his compositions. For this piece, I did not want to make the harmony complex, and so most of the chords are diatonic (within a single scale), but I wanted to create as much emotion as possible within that limitation.

Lily

A simple tune about returning to your home, in whichever context. Of the pieces on the program, this is the only one that was not originally composed for this project. I've been performing this song for a few years as a singer-songwriter, and I wanted to connect to that part of my musicianship. The horn arrangements were inspired by Spaghetti Western composers like Ennio Morricone and Bruno Nicolai.



